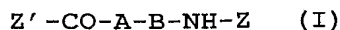


CLAIMS

1. A compound of formula I:



wherein:

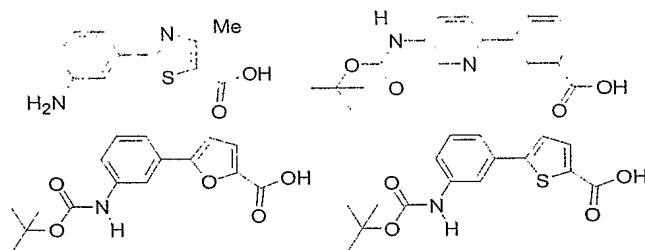
Z is H or an amino protecting group;

Z' is OH, a protected or activated hydroxyl group or Cl;

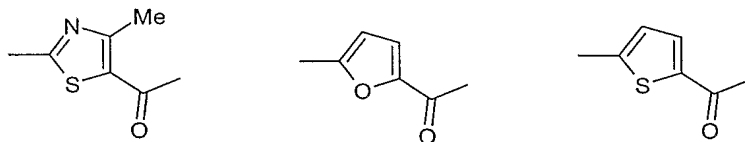
A is an optionally substituted C₅₋₆ arylene group;

B is an optionally substituted C₅₋₆ arylene group;

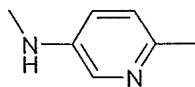
except for the following compounds:



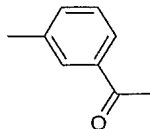
2. A compound according to claim 1, wherein when B is phenylene with an -NH- β to the bond between A and B, then -A-CO- is not:



3. A compound according to claim 1, wherein when -NH-B- is:



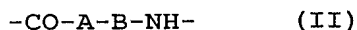
then -A-CO- is not:



4. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein Z' is a protected hydroxyl group.

5. A compound according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein A and B are independently selected from phenylene, and arylene groups derived from C₅ heteroaryl groups having one or two heteroatoms.

6. A polyamido moiety comprising at least one unit of formula II:

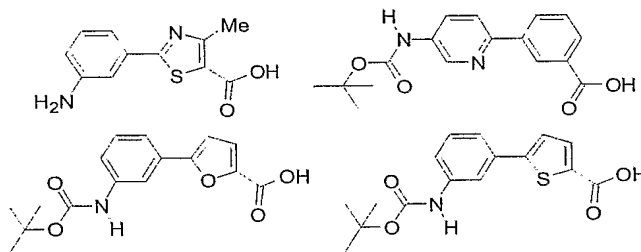


wherein:

A is an optionally substituted C₅₋₆ arylene group;

B is an optionally substituted C₅₋₆ arylene group;

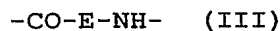
except for the following compounds:



7. A polyamido moiety according to claim 6, wherein said unit of formula II may be bound to one or more other units selected from:

(i) units of formula II; and

(ii) amino-heteroarylene-carbonyl units of formula III:



wherein E is either optionally substituted C₅₋₂₀ heteroarylene (G) or C₈₋₁₀ heteroarylene-C₅₋₂₀ arylene (K).

8. A polyamido moiety according to either claim 6 or claim 7, wherein A and B are independently selected from phenylene, and

arylene groups derived from C₅ heteroaryl groups having one or two heteroatoms.

9. A compound comprising a polyamido moiety according to any one of claims 6 to 8.

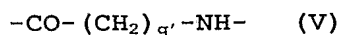
10. A compound according to claim 9, having a formula IV:



wherein:

Z'' is OH or a protected hydroxy group;

each T is independently selected from units of formulae II, III or V:



wherein:

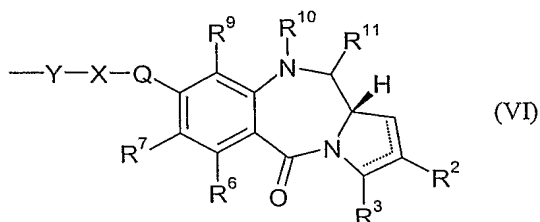
q' is from 1 to 3;

n is from 1 to 10;

q is from 1 to 3; and

R¹ and R² are independently selected from C₁₋₄ alkyl.

11. A compound according to claim 9, comprising a pyrrolobenzodiazepine moiety of formula VI:



and salts, solvates, chemically protected forms, and prodrugs thereof, wherein:

the dotted lines indicate the optional presence of a double bond between C1 and C2 or C2 and C3;

R² and R³ are independently selected from -H, -OH, =O, =CH₂, -CN, -R, OR, halo, =CH-R, O-SO₂-R, CO₂R and COR;

R⁶, R⁷ and R⁹ are independently selected from H, R, OH, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR', nitro, Me₃Sn and halo; where R and R' are independently selected from optionally substituted C₁₋₇ alkyl, C₃₋₂₀ heterocyclyl and C₅₋₂₀ aryl groups;

- 5 or R⁶ and R⁷ together form a group -O-(CH₂)_p-O-, where p is 1 or 2; R¹⁰ is a nitrogen protecting group and R¹¹ is either O-R¹⁵, wherein R¹⁵ is a hydroxyl protecting group, or R¹⁵ is OH; or R¹⁰ and R¹¹ together form a double bond between N10 and C11; Q is selected from O, S, NH or a single bond;
- 10 X is a divalent group such that HY = R, or a single bond; Y is either NH or C(=O).

12. A compound according to claim 11, wherein R⁹ is H.

- 15 13. A compound according to either claim 11 or claim 12, wherein R⁶ is selected from H, OH, OR, SH, NH₂, nitro and halo.

14. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 13, wherein R⁷ is independently selected from H, OR, SH, SR, NH₂, NHR, NRR' and halo.
- 20

15. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 14, wherein R¹⁰ is BOC, Troc or alloc.

- 25 16. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 15, wherein R¹⁵ is THP or a silyl oxygen protecting group.

17. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 14, wherein R¹⁰ and R¹¹ together form a double bond between N10 and C11.

30

18. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 17, wherein Q is NH, O or a single bond.

19. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 18, wherein X is a single bond or C₁₋₇ alkylene.
- 35

20. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 19, wherein R^3 is H.

5 21. A compound according to any one of claims 11 to 20, wherein R^2 is R.

22. A compound according to any one of claims 9 to 21 for use in a method of therapy.

10 23. A pharmaceutical composition containing a compound of any one of claims 9 to 21, and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.

15 24. Use of a compound according to any one of claims 9 to 21 in the manufacture of a medicament for treating a proliferative disease.

20 25. A method of treatment of a proliferative disease, comprising administering to a subject in need of treatment a therapeutically-effective amount of a compound of any one of claims 9 to 21.

25 26. Use of a compound of formula **I**, as defined according to claims 1 to 5, for the synthesis of a polyamido moiety as defined according to claims 6 to 8.